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INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6218
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3538
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7400
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4660
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1911
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1962
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 3155
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 1839
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4111
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4549
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/19/2016
TAGS: [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BL](#)
SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN MILITARY ACCORD STALLED IN SENATE

REF: LA PAZ 2726

Classified By: DCM Kris Urs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Venezuelan - Bolivian military cooperation agreement, already approved by the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) dominated lower house, appears to be stalled in the Senate Defense Commission. Four hours of closed door hearings on October 25 with the Commander of the Armed Forces General Vargas and Minister of Defense Walker San Miguel failed to convince the commission to recommend the approval of the accord and to forward the agreement for a senate vote. National Unity (UN) Senator Jose Villavicencio Amuruz told Emboff he wants the bill to die in committee and not be voted on. End summary.

¶2. (U) The five member (two MAS and three opposition) Bolivian Senate Defense Commission held a four hour closed door session on October 25 to discuss the proposed military cooperation agreement with Venezuela. The commission was briefed by the Commander of the Armed Forces General Vargas as well as Minister of Defense Walker San Miguel. After the session, the commission told the press it was unsatisfied by the briefing and had asked the military high command for a more detailed explanation and to clarify the many ambiguous areas of the agreement. The Commission must recommend either in favor of or against before the bill can be brought to the senate floor for a vote. The MAS controlled lower house has already voted in favor of the agreement.

¶3. (C) First Vice-President of the Senate and commission member Jose Villavicencio Amuruz (UN) told Emboff that his goal is to have the agreement die in committee and that he is in no hurry to have the commission issue its recommendation. Even if the bill made it to the opposition dominated senate floor, Villavicencio expressed confidence that it would be voted down.

¶4. (C) Comment: After a series of increasingly interventionist Venezuelan actions over the last month, this Venezuelan military agreement may face enough blowback to defeat it. Following Venezuelan Ambassador Julio Montes' October pledge to defend Bolivia's revolution with Venezuelan "blood and lives" (reftel), and subsequent comments in the same line by President Chavez, many Bolivians are beginning

to view Venezuela's intentions towards Bolivia as less than
benign. End Comment.

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